

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Western District of Virginia

United States of America

v.

Christopher Latham

Defendant(s)

Case No.

1:23mj36

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of April 4, 2022 through July 21, 2022 in the county of City of Bristol in the
Western District of Virginia, the defendant(s) violated:

<i>Code Section</i>	<i>Offense Description</i>
18 USC 1708	Possession of stolen mail
18 USC 1709	Theft of mail by a Postal Service employee

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date:

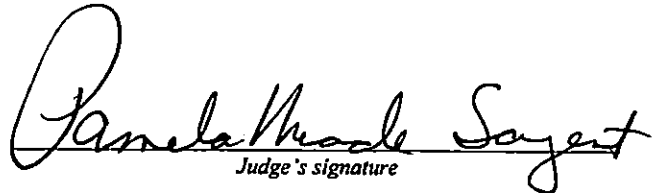
3/3/23

City and state:

Abingdon, Virginia

*Complainant's signature*

Joshua K. Bartley, Special Agent, USPS-OIG

Printed name and title*Judge's signature*

Pamela Meade Sargent, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

AFFIDAVIT of
Special Agent Joshua K. Bartley
U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General
Roanoke, Virginia

I, Joshua K. Bartley, Special Agent, U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General, being duly sworn, depose, and state the following:

1. I am a Special Agent with the United States Postal Service (USPS), Office of Inspector General (OIG), assigned to the Roanoke, VA field office, and have been so employed since April 2012. As part of my daily duties as a USPS-OIG Special Agent, I investigate mail theft, narcotics, and fraud against the United States Postal Service, in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code. Prior to working for USPS-OIG, I was a Special Agent with the United States Secret Service for two and a half years. I began my career in law enforcement with the Virginia State Police as a State Trooper and enforced the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia for four years.

2. I submit this Affidavit in support of a criminal complaint charging Christopher LATHAM (hereinafter LATHAM), with violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1709 (theft of mail by a Postal Service employee and Title 18, United States Code, Section 1708 (possession of stolen mail)).

3. The statements contained in the Affidavit are based upon my personal knowledge, observation and review of records and other

physical evidence obtained during my investigation, discussions with other USPS employees, and upon my training as a USPS-OIG Special Agent. Because this Affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing a criminal complaint, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause to believe that LATHAM knowingly violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 1709 (theft of mail by a Postal Service employee) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 1708 (possession of stolen mail).

4. LATHAM, who resides at 271 N CEDAR ACRES Lebanon, VA 24266, was employed as a City Carrier at the Bristol, Tennessee Post Office when the OIG began receiving and monitoring complaints of missing mail from the area around Latham's mail route. Latham's mail route was entirely in the City of Bristol, Virginia, which is in the Western District of Virginia. Information from Post Office management indicated LATHAM was having financial issues as he was asking other USPS employees for personal money loans.

5. On April 4, 2022, Acting Postmaster (A/PM), David Laws, Bristol, VA, conducted an "integrity mail test" in which he mingled two OIG-prepared test mail pieces into the mail to be delivered on LATHAM's mail route. The first test mail piece contained two gift cards. The second test mail piece contained a

ten dollar bill and two five dollar bills. Both test mail pieces were in envelopes addressed to an address in Bristol, Virginia that does not exist. A/PM Laws then instructed Postal Supervisor, Chelsea Cornett, to give the mail, with the OIG test mailings, to LATHAM for delivery. A/PM Laws stated that LATHAM placed the test mailings into his case for delivery, even though the address on the test mailings does not exist. (When a City Carrier encounters mail addressed to an address that does not exist on their route, they do not put them in their case for delivery. Rather, they leave them at the Post Office in a location for "throwback letters," i.e. mail to be returned to the sender.) When LATHAM departed the Post Office for his route, Supervisor Cornett checked the throwback letters for the test mailings but could not locate them. After LATHAM returned to the Bristol Post Office and placed his outgoing mail into the hamper, Supervisor Cornett checked the hamper for the OIG test mailings. Supervisor Cornett located two loose gift cards in the hamper which matched the gift cards contained in the first test piece. Although the gift cards were discovered loose and mixed in with the mail that LATHAM put into the outgoing mail hamper, the gift cards had not been redeemed. Other than the two gift cards, the rest of the OIG test mailings (i.e. the envelopes, greeting cards, and the cash contained in the second test mail piece) were never recovered.

6. After the April 4, 2022, integrity mail test described above, a covert camera was installed in LATHAM's Postal Service Long Life Vehicle (LLV) on April 26, 2022, and removed on July 21, 2022. Due to storage limitations, surveillance video only captured images of Latham's LLV from May 26, 2022, until June 30, 2022. Over the course of the investigation, LATHAM was observed opening letters and removing the contents while delivering mail on his route in the City of Bristol, which is in the Western District of Virginia. When the envelopes contained cash, LATHAM placed the cash in his pocket and resealed the envelopes.

7. On July 21, 2022, this affiant and USPS-OIG SA Chad Christian interviewed LATHAM regarding his involvement in missing mail from the Bristol Post Office. LATHAM admitted to stealing mail over the past two years.

8. This affiant asked LATHAM about Veteran Affairs (VA) prescription pills that had gone missing from the Bristol Post Office and asked if LATHAM took those parcels. LATHAM admitted that he stole VA prescription pills from his route about 6 times but no more than 12 times. Between September 4, 2021 and July 2, 2022, six Veterans Affairs Parcels containing prescription pills were reported missing from the Bristol Post Office. LATHAM confirmed that on July 2, 2022, he stole VA prescription 5 mg oxycodone pills from his route, which were addressed to 103

Rainbow Circle Bristol, VA 24201 (located in the Western District of Virginia).

9. This affiant questioned LATHAM about the address 322 Norfolk Ave., Bristol, VA 24201 (which is in the Western District of Virginia). LATHAM stated that a friend of his lives at that address. LATHAM stated he (LATHAM) put mail down his shirt while in the LLV, took it into the bathroom at the Norfolk Ave. residence, where he opened the mail, used the contents to trade for pills, and discreetly disposed of the packaging in the trash at the house.

10. During the course of the investigation, on April 12, 2022, this affiant was notified that LATHAM sold a Samsung Galaxy S9+ cellphone for \$45 on April 11, 2022, at an ecoATM machine (automated kiosk that allows individuals to sell electronic devices for cash) located inside the Walmart at 13245 Lee Highway, Bristol, VA 24201 (in the Western District of Virginia). LATHAM's USPS scanner confirmed LATHAM was in the area of Walmart at the time of the transaction. Records from ecoATM show that LATHAM sold 27 phones at Walmart stores in the Western District of Virginia between July 2021 and May 2022. This affiant questioned LATHAM about the cell phones he sold at ecoATM machines. LATHAM stated he stole the phones from the mail inside the Bristol Post Office.

12. This affiant questioned LATHAM about a missing Louis Vuitton purse from Bristol Post Office. LATHAM stated that he took a woman's size wallet, that was awaiting pick up at the Bristol Post Office, but didn't know if it was Louis Vuitton or not. However, LATHAM admitted that he sold the wallet for cash and used the cash to buy Oxycodone pills.

WHEREFORE, based on the foregoing, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that Christopher LATHAM, a United States Postal Service employee, did embezzle, steal, and remove cash and prescription medications from letters and packages which had been entrusted to LATHAM and came into his possession intended to be conveyed by mail in violation of Title 18 United States Code, Section 1709, and did unlawfully have in his possession articles contained in letters, packages and mail which had been stolen, taken, embezzled, and abstracted, knowing the same to have been stolen, taken, embezzled, and abstracted in violation of Title 18 United States Code, Section 1708.



Joshua K. Bartley
Special Agent
U.S. Postal Service
Office of Inspector General

telephonically
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 3rd day of March 2023.

Pamela Meade Sargent
The Honorable Pamela M. Sargent
United States Magistrate Judge
Western District of Virginia

Reviewed by:

s/Danielle Stone
Assistant United States Attorney

Date